

LAKSAMANA; THE GREAT HERO OF THE MALAYS.

A ROMANCE.

By WALTER MURRAY GIBSON.

Originally published in the Hawaiian language, and written especially for the instruction and entertainment of Hawaiians.

CHAPTER IV.

The Education of the Wild Man in the Palace of King Sapihin by the Princess Umba.

On the morning, at the hour of the morning sacrifice to the gods, King Sapihin came to the chamber of the Princess, and thus spoke to her: My daughter, I must have your terrible wild friend removed to a place of security, where he may be taught some rules of orderly life, and have some knowledge given to him; I feel that he may at any time disturb the order of our Palace, and offend the gods. He is not a Malay man who knows any rules of life; but a mere beast, who lies at your chamber door like a dog. The Princess replied pleadingly, saying: "O, kind and gracious father! I know that you only advise me on all matters as well as on this subject, for my good. But consider, dear papa, the character of this wild creature. He has not acted either as a savage or a beast. He acts nobly, and forbearingly in many cases—even like a chief of rank. He does not wish to hurt anyone, unless he is attacked; and then he only fights for his great strength to remove his assailant out of the way. And no chief of the Court of Sapihin could be more careful and considerate with me than this untamed man of the forest: therefore I pray you, most gracious father, and King, that this poor wild follower, who has saved my life, may be allowed yet awhile to remain in your Palace, and let me provide some means for his training and instruction in the ways of life, suited to the Court of Sapihin."

And, after some discussion between father and daughter, King Sapihin agreed to his dear daughter's wish—the wild man, who had been with strong assurance that if her protégé should commit any act of savage impiety, or violence, he would be immediately removed, or perhaps slain.

The object of this discussion had been seated near by during the conversation; and although he did not understand its purport, yet he seemed to comprehend that he was concerned in the matter. The occasional kindly look of interest of his noble mistress gave him this assurance. And when King Sapihin had retired, the wild man approached the Princess, and, stooping down, took hold of one of her feet, and removing the clasp, or slipper, kissed the foot many times, and attempted to place it on his neck. But the royal young lady withdrew her foot, and making signs to the wild man, bade him stand up. She then called for a *juruma*, or steward, of the royal household. When he appeared in the presence of the Princess, she gave him orders to procure clothing, bedding, a chair in which to array the wild man, and she made signs to her savage friend to follow the *juruma*, and to be clothed.

The wild man readily obeyed. He first was placed in a bath; and his grand, well-proportioned body, when thoroughly cleansed and perfumed, after the manner of the Malays, shone resplendently. A skilled *puncher*, or barber, trimmed his wild, bushy hair, so that he appeared with a fine flowing beard, and with a crowning mass of well-adjusted curly hair. It was difficult to find clothing to suit his athletic proportions, but after a while he was fitted with a fine white linen tunic that covered his broad and brawny shoulders. Over this was placed a crimson sash, or wide-sleeved coat; beneath were flowing trousers of silk, in green and white stripes. The two garments were bound to his waist by a golden girdle made of many links, wrought in filigree; and to this girdle was attached a *kriss*, or crooked dirk, with a diamond-studded hilt of the most famous Malay manufacture. The strong, yet well-shaped feet, were bound with sandals of tinted and jeweled antelope leather; and a feather-woven helmet, surmounted with long curving plumes of the birds of paradise, completed the costume of this grand impressive man.

When his dressing was complete, he hastened to present himself before his noble mistress. And she and her lady attendants were profoundly impressed with the changed looks and altered bearing of the wild man dressed.

His attitude was now more erect, and his step seemed measured with more dignity. His face had received a new expression of respectful majesty. His large, clear eyes sparkled with a fascinating splendor. All his features were those of a handsome man, and one having blood born to command. And the wild savage of the forest disappeared beneath the costume of a Prince.

The Princess felt a new sensation of respect and admiration when this striking, chief-like figure came before her; and she would not allow him, as he wished to do, to stoop down and kiss her foot; but she held forth her dainty little hand for the salute of his lips.

Ladies and courtiers stood in wondering admiration of this remarkable being. And as they commented upon his fine appearance, and the accents given of his great strength, there was a sudden exclamation by many of the words *laksa-mana*, or *laksa-mana*—signifying the might or power of ten thousand; or, in other words, that this was the hero to be styled the great ten thousand—a great demi-god of India. And then the Princess Umba, repeating the words, exclaimed: "This shall be his name! This is the chief Laksa-mana!" And all the courtiers cried out: "Hail to Laksa-mana!" And they all bowed before him.

But Laksa-mana gave little heed to the obeisances of courtiers. His attention was fixed on the beautiful Princess; and he came near to her, as he had done before, and crouched down at her feet. She motioned to him to take a seat in a manner like other courtiers present, upon a feather mat near by her. Then she ordered to appear before her a learned *Guru*, or scholar, who, when he appeared in the royal presence, held in his hand some pieces of polished bamboo, upon which were inscribed sharply angular characters—the letters of the language of the Malays of Menangkabou—the most renowned people in all the great Malay Archipelago.

The Princess commanded that the *Guru* should give instruction every day to Laksa-mana; and she commanded the *Guru* to learn to him in the question of her language. She pointed to a mat, and spoke its name distinctly, which Laksa-mana repeated after her. And, by-and-by, he somewhat impatiently pointed to the Princess, and when she understood his wish, and repeated her own name, he cried out enthusiastically—Umba! Umba!—and would repeat no other word for some time, but only continue to cry out the name of his beloved mistress.

The *Guru*, or teacher, who was learned in the language of the great Malay Archipelago, now explained to the Princess that he recognized in the few imperfect utterances of the wild man the monosyllabic language of the Orangkubus—a strange, wild, hairy race of men of Central Sumatra. He said that the Malays of the Empire of Menangkabou regarded the Orangkubus almost the same as the Orang Outangs that inhabited the dense jungles of the great island, and the Malays called the Kubus "Tai Orang," the refuse, or ordure of men; yet they were human, and not beasts, and had a trade language. However, they were captured by the Malays like wild beasts, and used as slaves. The learned *Guru*, who observed that the Princess seemed to be annoyed to discover that her wild hero was a Kubu, fit only to be made a slave, went on to explain that Laksa-mana bore no resemblance whatever in his features and stature to the wretched Kubus; and he doubted not that this strange, remarkable man, who had been discovered in a wild, exposed state, was another one of many instances in Malay history of abduction by the wild creatures of the forest, of a Malay child which they had reared as one of their own. Then the *Guru* said that there was a wide-spread tradition in Menangkabou of a lost baby prince, stolen from his nurse about twenty-five years ago by the men-monkeys of the forest.

Now, the Princess Umba felt reassured, and would have believed that the lost baby prince, grown up to manhood, probably stood before her. She already, in her heart, looked upon her wild savior from the storm and wreck as a prince in disguise. She no longer regarded him as an interesting savage to be tamed for some domestic purpose; and the Princess became reserved, yet kindly and courteous in her manner towards Laksa-mana.

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hanging of a man on the gallows. I was standing in the crowd, and

was looking at the man who was to be hanged. I was looking at him

and I was looking at him. I was looking at him. I was looking at him.

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